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Diana T Fritz 03/20/2007 03:50:07 PM From DB/Inbox: Search Results

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SIPDIS  
TELEGRAM

November 05, 2003

To: No Action Addressee  
Action: Unknown  
From: AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI (ABU DHABI 4889 - UNKNOWN)  
TAGS: OIIP, KMDR  
Captions: None  
Subject: MEDIA SUMMIT IN THE UAE  
Ref: None

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UNCLAS ABU DHABI 04889

SIPDIS  
CXABU:  
ACTION: PAO  
INFO: ECON POL AMB DCM  
Laser1:  
ACTION: PAO

DISSEMINATION: PAO  
CHARGE: PROG

APPROVED: CDA:RALBRIGHT  
DRAFTED: PAO:AHOSHAN  
CLEARED: PAO:HOLSIN-WINDECKER

VZCZCADI417  
OO RUEHC RUENAAA RUEKJCS RUEHZM RUEHLO RUEHFR  
RHRMDAB RUCJACC RUCQSOC  
DE RUEHAD #4889/01 3091207  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
O 051207Z NOV 03  
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2321  
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE  
RUEHZM/GCC COLLECTIVE  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 0738  
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 0768  
RHRMDAB/COMUSNAVCENT  
RUCJACC/USCINCCENT MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA//  
RUCQSOC/USCINCSOC MACDILL AFB FL//PA//

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 004889

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/ARP; NEA/PPD; NEA/RA; INR/R/MR; PA;  
INR/NESA; INR/B; IIP/G/NEA-SA  
WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE  
SECDEF FOR OASD/PA  
USCINCCENT FOR POLAD  
LONDON FOR GOLDRICH; PARIS FOR O'FRIEL  
BAGHDAD FOR OFFICE OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KMDR](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA SUMMIT IN THE UAE

1. SUMMARY: THE MEDIA SUMMIT IN DUBAI (OCTOBER 7-8, 2003) WAS

HELD UNDER THE AUSPICES OF SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID FOR THE THIRD CONSECUTIVE YEAR. THIS YEAR'S HEADLINE WAS "WAR AND THE MEDIA." AMONG THE SENIOR OFFICIALS WHO SPOKE IN THE OPENING CEREMONY INCLUDED SHEIKH MOHAMMED BIN RASHID, SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED, AND THE GERMAN CHANCELLOR GHERHARD SCHROEDER WHO WAS ON AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO THE UAE. A GREAT DEAL OF THIS YEAR'S SESSIONS AND WORKSHOPS FOCUSED ON THE ROLE OF ARAB MEDIA IN THE WAR IN IRAQ. THE GENERAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE SUMMIT AND SPEAKERS' COMMENTS WAS VERY ANTI-AMERICAN. END SUMMARY.

12. IN HIS OPENING SPEECH, SHEIKH MOHAMED BIN RASHID, URGED THE UNITED STAND TO STOP THE CONTINUOUS ISRAELI AGGRESSION ON THE PALESTINIANS AND CONDEMNED THE RECENT ISRAELI ATTACKS AGAINST SYRIA CONSIDERING IT AS A DESTRUCTION OF THE WHOLE PEACE PROCESS IN THE MIDDLE EAST. HE ADDRESSED THE JOURNALISTS SAYING: "IN THE CURRENT CENTURY, YOUR RESPONSIBILITY IS GREAT, ESPECIALLY BECAUSE THE INFLUENCE OF NEWS ON PUBLIC OPINION IS MUCH MORE STRONGER THAN ANY OTHER INFLUENCE."

13. SHEIKH ABDULLAH BIN ZAYED PRESENTED THE KEYNOTE ADDRESS. HE CONSTRUCTIVELY CRITICIZED NEWS REPORTING IN THE ARAB WORLD, HE NOTED: "BEING ABSOLUTELY FRANK, WE CAN STATE SIMPLY THAT THE ARAB MEDIA FAILED TO EXPOSE THE TRUE NATURE OF IRAQI REGIME BEFORE THE WAR." HE ADDED: "ALL OF US WERE AWARE THAT THE REGIME WAS BUILT ON TERRORISM AND SUPPRESSION, LAUNCHED MORE THAN A WAR AGAINST ITS NEIGHBORS AND OCCUPIED A NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND TRIED TO WIPE IT OUT OF THE POLITICAL DICTIONARY.... THE ARAB MEDIA DEALT WITH THE REGIME AS IF IT WERE SAFE AND SOUND, AND WENT ALONG WITH ITS EFFORTS TO PORTRAY THE IMPENDING CONFLICT ONLY AS A WAR BETWEEN WESTERN POWERS AND AN ARAB REGIME THAT WAS READY TO CONFRONT AND DEFY THEM IN THE NAME OF ARAB DIGNITY AND SOLIDARITY.... THE ARAB MEDIA WAS DISTANT FROM REALITY AND THEREFORE, CONTRIBUTED IN MISLEADING THE PUBLIC OPINION BY PROVIDING IT WITH UNREALISTIC CONCEPTIONS OF PROBABLE CONSEQUENCES OF THE DISPUTE THAT SEEMED INEVITABLE AND IMMINENT....WE AS ARAB MEDIA HAVE TO BE OBJECTIVE. NOTHING MUST PREVENT US FROM CRITICIZING OURSELVES AND REVIEWING OUR EXPERIENCES IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE A KNOWLEDGEABLE ARAB MEDIA THAT DOES NOT MISLEAD THE READERS, AND INTERPRETS, BUT DOES NOT DISTORT, FACTS."

14. ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING SESSIONS WAS CONDUCTED ON THE FINAL DAY OF THE SUMMIT WERE IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS SUCH AS "DOES THE WESTERN MEDIA STILL SEE THE ARAB WORLD THROUGH A DISTORTED EYE? DOES THE ARAB MEDIA VIEW THE WESTERN MEDIA WITH DISAPPOINTMENT AND MISTRUST? HOW FAR APART ARE THE TWO VIEWPOINTS? HOW CAN THEY BE RECONCILED?" THE MAJORITY OF THE SPEAKERS NOTED THAT THE ARAB MEDIA PLAYED A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE DURING THE WAR IN IRAQ. ARAB SPEAKERS CONCLUDED THAT THE ARAB MEDIA, AND MAINLY THE TV NEWS SATELLITE CHANNELS (AL-JAZEIRAH, AL-ARABEYAH, ABU DHABI TV AND AL-HAYAT-LBC) HAVE ENDED WESTERN MONOPOLY ON THE NEWS THAT IS PRESENTED TO US DAILY. HOWEVER, THE SPEAKERS CRITICIZED THE U.S. FOR RESORTING INTO THE SO-CALLED MEDIA EMBEDDING WHICH IN SHORT KEPT ALL MEDIA OUTLETS UNDER THE US MILITARY CONTROL.

15. ONE OF THE SPEAKERS, DR. HISHAM SHARABI BLAMED THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION FOR THE CURRENT RIFT BETWEEN EAST AND WEST AND DESCRIBED THE AMERICAN ADMINISTRATION AS ANTI-ARAB. DR. SHARABI LAMENTED "WHAT FOLLOWED WAS A HIGHLY RACIAL HATE CAMPAIGN AGAINST ARABS AND MUSLIMS WITH THE WESTERN PRESS PITCHING IN TO MAKE THINGS WORSE." MARTIN WOOLLACOTT, ANOTHER SPEAKER DURING THE SAME SESSION, ADMITTED THAT "'A DEGREE OF DISAPPOINTMENT' EXISTED AMONG ARAB JOURNALIST ON THEIR WESTERN COUNTERPARTS," HE ALSO ADDED THAT "IT WAS TIME FOR THE TWO SYSTEMS TO SEEK CONVERGENCE, SCOPE FOR WHICH IS PLENTY."

16. DURING THE SAME SESSION AND IN ANOTHER SESSION THAT HOSTED PAN-ARAB ONE OF THE SESSIONS FOCUSED ON THE U.S. MIDDLE EAST TV NETWORK EXPECTED TO START BROADCASTING IN DECEMBER. DR. HISHAM SHARABI NOTED: "THIS PROJECT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE BECAUSE THE MESSAGE IS BAD AND THE CONTENT IS BAD". HE THOUGH THAT THE AMERICAN-ARAB RELATIONSHIP HAS NEVER BEEN AS BAD AS IT IS NOW UNDER THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION. COMMENTING ON THE RADIO SAWA AND THE METVN, AN IRAQI SHIITE ATTENDING THE SUMMIT NOTED THAT "IF YOU DO NOT LIKE WHAT YOU SEE IN THE MIRROR DO NOT BLAME THE MIRROR FOR WHAT YOU DO NOT LIKE TO SEE OR EVEN BREAK IT. INSTEAD GO AND CORRECT WHAT IS WRONG IN YOUR FACE." FEW SPEAKERS NOTED,

"THE ANTI-AMERICAN ENVIRONMENT HAS NEVER BEEN IN THIS PART OF THE  
WORLD AS BAD AS IT IS NOWADAYS."

ALBRIGHT